

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **EXECUTIVE HOST**

DATE: MAY 2, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Supervisor Caimano
Supervisor Wm. Thomas
Supervisor Tessier
Supervisor Barody
Pamela Morin, Group
Tour/Convention Promoter
Leonard Fosbrook, President, Warren
County Economic Development
Corp.

Members Absent:

Mayor Robert Blais, Village of Lake
George

Others Present:

Joan Parsons, Commissioner of
Administrative and Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk
Paul Dusek, County Attorney
Kate Johnson, Tourism Coordinator
Supervisor Kenny
Supervisor Merlino
Sheriff Cleveland
Lieutenant Robert Smith
Scott Sopczyk, Transportation Director of
Greater Glens Falls Transit
Representing NYS Association of Fire
Chiefs:
Thomas LaBelle, Executive Director
Natalie Whitton, Site Solutions Worldwide
Brigitte Connors, Site Solutions Worldwide
Fred Austin, Fort William Henry Corp.
Representing Paul Kaza Associates:
Michael Niggel
Barbara Devine
Christine Margiotta, *The Post-Star*
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office
Specialist

Mr. Caimano called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

Ms. Morin, Group Tour/Convention Promoter for the Tourism Department, distributed an Agenda packet to each of the Committee members and a copy is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Caimano said he felt this would be the last meeting of the Warren County Executive Host Committee, provided everything went well today. He stated it was his hope that this would be *the end of a wonderful beginning*.

Mr. Caimano began the Agenda review with the Contract with F.I.R.E. 2006 and he invited Mr. LaBelle to report on what had been collected in sponsorships, to date.

Mr. LaBelle reported there was no money "in the til" although there were 3 national companies who had reported their interest in the event: Tyco Corporation, Nextel and Motorola. He said he understood Americade, Inc. had approached Honda regarding a

sponsorship.

Mr. LaBelle stated he was optimistic the national companies would step up and sponsor the event, since they have not turned him down, to date. He clarified that 5 national companies had, in-fact, said no to the sponsorships.

Mr. LaBelle commented some of the normal sponsors have not responded this year, which usually brought in between \$20,000 and \$30,000 in revenue. He guessed the increase in gas prices had not necessarily helped with the recruitment drive.

Mr. Caimano queried if there was any need to put the tents up. Mr. LaBelle explained the booths under the tents have been sold to a large number of vendors. He also commented the radio station, WRGB, had signed on; Site Solutions had coordinated the billboards along the way, in Zone 5, and with WGNA to promote sponsorships and vendor participation.

Mrs. Parsons left the meeting at 1:42 p.m.

Mr. Barody suggested the Warren County Tourism Department may want to take advantage of the empty tent walls and advertise for the County. Ms. Johnson pointed out the appropriate signage may not be available at this late date, and had not been budgeted for.

Responding to questions from various supervisors, Mr. LaBelle explained neither the Fire Chiefs nor Site Solutions had approached any of the local businesses. He said the local sponsors had been left for the County to contact. In addition, he stated Six Flags - Great Escape had not been contacted, either. Out of concern for the other businesses in Warren County, he also noted none of the events had been scheduled at the Great Escape.

As for attendee registrations, Mr. LaBelle mentioned the numbers were rather low at this point, although most of the groups had verbally indicated they would be attending. He pointed out various mailings had been sent (24,000 post-card mailing; 15,000 registration mailing, followed by a 13,000 registration mailing to everyone, etc.).

To date, Mr. LaBelle said the actual registration revenue at this point, when compared to last year, reflected more full-session registrants, yet fewer 1 day registrants. Traditionally, he said, 50% of the registration occurs during the last 6-weeks before the event, which would be 5,000 full-session attendees. In view of the Hudson Valley Fireman's Convention being in the area, he said it was difficult to estimate how many 1-day attendees would register. He noted he had budgeted for 15,000 attenders.

Mr. Caimano observed the website for the Hudson Valley event appeared to be much more informational than the Fire Chief's website. Mr. LaBelle responded by explaining the Association's website contained information on the entire conference - rather than

just one event.

Mr. Kenny expressed his concern that Mr. LaBelle had spoken so optimistically about the sponsorships and registrations, yet at the "11th hour", the reality was no where near his projections. He noted the County had a considerably large investment in the event, and there was reason to be concerned.

Mr. LaBelle mentioned that a number of Supervisors had attended the 2005 convention to observe the number of attendees and the types of exhibits. He said the Association had every reason to believe the 2006 convention in Lake George would draw even more attendees. As for the exhibitors, he stated, there was a waiting list with 40 vendors waiting for a space to open up. He confirmed the exhibitors were very enthusiastic about the event.

Regarding the local sponsorships, Mr. Kenny pointed out, the County was prohibited from soliciting funds from private businesses.

Ms. Morin pointed out the organizers from the other June events were not present today, to report the sponsorships they may have secured.

Following a brief discussion, Natalie Whitton, of Site Solutions Worldwide, reported that only 20 of the 85 participating hotels, did not have any rooms booked, just yet. She said she understood that several hotels were either sold out or booked at over 50%.

Returning to Agenda review, Mr. Caimano pointed out that Sheriff Cleveland was in attendance, although he had other obligations that would prevent him from staying for the whole meeting. Mr. Caimano suggested the Committee move forward to the Traffic/Safety portion of the Agenda, and he turned the floor over to the Sheriff.

Sheriff Cleveland reported the "short version" was that his staff has worked out the duty assignments and who would be where, at what time, and what for. He said he felt phone conversations between the Sheriff's Office and Mr. LaBelle's staff would be sufficient to work out last minute issues. In addition, he pointed out the assignments were coordinated with the Hudson Valley Firemen's Convention events, as well.

Sheriff Cleveland said he understood the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs' did in-fact, have at least one event scheduled at the Great Escape. Mr. LaBelle clarified there was a banquet at the Great Escape's Bavarian Palace.

As for radio contact, Mr. LaBelle explained he had developed an "instant command chart" and he would send it to Sheriff Cleveland. He noted the command center would be at the conference center on the Fort William Henry property, and there would be approximately 90 portable "burner operable" building units.

Messrs. Haskell and Dusek entered the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Mr. LaBelle verified with Sheriff Cleveland that Beach Road would be turned into a 1-way, east bound road, for busses only. Sheriff Cleveland pointed out the busses would pull up to let the passengers unload onto the island and walk over to the entrance to the convention.

Mr. Barody said he felt there were two areas of authority that may need to be designated for oversight. One area, he noted, was the tents being set up, and the second area, was tent security, in between the June events.

Sheriff Cleveland confirmed that he would be in contact with the security firm for any issued that may arise. He said he had worked with this same security firm in the past and he did not foresee any problems.

Responding to Ms. Whitton's comments regarding a specified "point person" throughout the entire show, Sheriff Cleveland suggested the Fire Chiefs' would have a "point person" named 24 hours a day. He stated, the Sheriff's Office would work the same way; someone would be available around the clock.

Sheriff Cleveland and Lieutenant Smith left the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Mr. Caimano returned to Agenda review at the F.I.R.E. 2006 contract and acknowledged that Mr. Dusek was now in attendance.

Paul Dusek, County Attorney, reported the final contract had been signed with the Fire Chiefs' Association, and would need to be signed by the Town and Village of Lake George, as well as the Fort William Henry.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Dusek confirmed the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) had arranged for both the tents and the security firm, which meant that Len Fosbrook, as the EDC President, would have the authority to enforce the contracts. However, he explained that Mr. Fosbrook could designate an agent to act on his behalf for supervision, etc.

Mr. Austin, of the Fort William Henry, volunteered to act on Mr. Fosbrook's behalf, since he would already be on the grounds. Mr. Fosbrook said he felt that Mr. Austin was the best person for the job. Mr. Dusek suggested Mr. Fosbrook could delegate the authority via a simple letter which granted authority to Mr. Austin.

Discussion turned the Transportation issues as Mr. Sopczyk, of the Greater Glens Falls Transit Transportation, pointed out the additional transportation bids were scheduled to be opened tomorrow, May 3, 2006 at 3:00 p.m.. He reminded the Committee the County had requested that he obtain the bids and the City would ultimately need a contract for reimbursement of the costs.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Caimano said he would prefer to know the bid results before entertaining a motion for a contract. He added, if the costs were too high, it may not happen.

Mr. Caimano pointed out the one remaining issue listed on the Agenda, under Contract F.I.R.E. 2006, was with regards to installation of the Snow Fence.

Lou Tessier, as Supervisor for the Town of Lake George, indicated that the Town had barricades, etc. However, he noted the Fort William Henry normally installed the fencing for the car show, so they would be aware of the boundaries, etc.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Tessier agreed that he would contact the Village of Lake George's Mayor Blais to coordinate the fencing.

As for Structures, Mr. Caimano next turned to Mr. Fosbrook for a report on the status. Len Fosbrook, as President of the EDC, distributed a handout to each of the Committee members and a copy is on file with the minutes. He said one remaining issue concerned the additional security that may be needed in between the June events. In addition, he noted the dates for set up, use, and removal of the tents were illustrated on the calendar attached to the handout.

Mr. Haskell left the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

Mr. Caimano acknowledged that representatives from Paul Kaza Associates were in attendance today, to obtain information for press releases. He said he felt that the Site Solutions representatives would want to meet with them after the meeting.

As for Site Solutions report, Mr. Caimano turned privilege of the floor over to Ms. Whitton. She explained that May 15th was the cut off date for the hotels/motels to hold the block of rooms for the Fire Chiefs' convention. After that date, the registrants will have to compete with the general public for room availability.

Ms. Whitton confirmed that she would report to Ms. Morin on May 16th regarding the number of rooms booked, etc.

Mr. Haskell reentered the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

Mr. Caimano said he felt perhaps the Committee should meet 1 more time, after May 15th, to review the sponsorship status, etc. He queried when Mr. LaBelle might guess he would have some good solid numbers to report to the Committee.

Mr. LaBelle commented the waiting line to enter the convention, the 2nd year in Syracuse, was a 1 ½ hour wait. Only 2 years later, he noted, the waiting line was a short 10 minutes. Since many of the attendees did not pay their own expenses related to the convention, he said, the show was often more lucrative at the local level. However, that also meant the volunteer fire departments depended on "one of the

guys" to take charge and make the arrangements to attend.

Mr. Caimano requested the Clerk of the Board, Joan Sady, to schedule one final meeting during the week of May 22nd.

Mr. LaBelle pointed out all of the mailings have stressed the need to register for the show, prior to May 15th, to ensure access to the charter bus transportation. He explained that when the convention was held in other counties, the hotel choices were much more limited, and located closer together, unlike the situation in Warren County. He also said the Association may have "shot themselves in the foot" when they assured their members the Lake George area had "more than enough rooms."

Ms. Sady left the meeting at 2:21 p.m.

Mr. Austen quickly reviewed some of the parking area restrictions regarding the Fort William Henry grounds.

General discussion ensued with regards to handicapped parking spots for those confined to wheel chairs as compared to ambulatory persons.

Mr. Fosbrook left the meeting at 2:23 p.m.

General discussion turned to the various Trolley stops. Mr. Sopczyk pointed out the Trolleys were public transportation and would not pass by someone who was flagging them down.

As for Marketing, Ms. Johnson reported she had obtained quotations for polo shirts for the County volunteers. Mr. Caimano suggested the request should be referred to the Occupancy Tax meeting, immediately following this meeting.

In response to Mr. Sopczyk's question, Mr. Caimano confirmed the bus company could use the Municipal Center parking lot as the overnight staging area.

Ms. Whitton pointed out that she was still waiting to hear what had been decided regarding banners to go across Route 9. Mrs. Johnson reported the decision had been to go with pole banners, and NOT the street banners across Route 9. Ms. Whitton expressed her disappointment since the contract had called for street banners and she had not been informed of the decision to eliminate them.

Ms. Margiotta entered the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

Following a lengthy discussion, Ms. Johnson indicated she would research the Committee minutes as to when the banners had been discussed. She said she would then contact Mr. Caimano and Ms. Whitton.

As for the welcome bags for the attendees, Ms. Johnson and Ms. Morin agreed to draft a welcome letter to be signed by Chairman Thomas, Mayor Blais and Supervisors Tessier.

Ms. Whitton requested assistance in contacting Mayor Blais to coordinate the opening night events. Mr. Tessier stated he would be happy to speak with the Mayor for Ms. Whitton.

Ms. Whitton further noted she had been asked to coordinate the color coded parking areas for the various attendees. She said she had prepared a chart, and she turned it over to Ms. Morin for follow-up.

On motion by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Barody, Mr. Caimano adjourned the meeting at 2:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist

had not been approached beverage distributors had not been approached since Americade was completely against any connection to alcoholic beverages.